

for himself, or, more popularly, through an easy reliance on monk, ceremony, saint, or savior.

Moreover, Buddhism proved adaptable and its interpreters accommodated it in large part—although never entirely—to previous Chinese prejudices and conceptions.

Finally, the time was eminently favorable for the growth of Buddhism in China. The faith was still in its heyday in the land of its birth and Buddhist missionaries were enthusiastically propagating it in new lands. Mahayana Buddhism especially was strong (although Hinayana was not unrepresented) in what is now Northwest India (Gandhara and Kashmir) and in some of the regions to the north (Kashgar, Yarkand, and other centers) across which ran the trade routes between China, Persia, and the Roman Orient. Here, then, was a great spiritual movement in the full flood of missionary enthusiasm and expansion, and in lands with which China had commercial contacts.

Just when this was true, in China the structure of society had been enfeebled by disorder. The state was not in a position to offer the effective resistance to Buddhism—even when it wished to do so—that it could under the great monarchs of the Han. Confucian orthodoxy suffered from the irregularities and partial collapse of the educational and bureaucratic structure which were its bulwarks and from the civil strife which must have taken heavy toll of its leaders. Moreover, Confucianism was burdensome, and its debility may have been greeted with a feeling of relief. To be sure, Taoism thrived. It was often popular, as under the Eastern Chin, when it was dominant in court circles. However, a few Taoists, distressed by the degradation of their faith, greeted Buddhism as akin to the reform which they were seeking. Then,

too, Chinese, disheartened by the chaos in society,
welcomed the
refuge from the world which Buddhist monasteries
and Buddhist
philosophy seemed to afford. In the North, finally,
were non-
Chinese peoples, some of whom had contacts with
that Central
Asia where Buddhism was now so strong, and upon
most of whom
the esteem for native Chinese culture rested more
lightly than
upon the pure Chinese.

It is not surprising, therefore, that these
centuries saw Bud-
dhism become an integral and influential part of
Chinese life.
Nor is it strange that Buddhism was more widely
successful than